2010 Back Up Your Birth Control Campaign Toolkit

The 2010 Back Up Your Birth Control (BUYBC) Day of Action will be held on March 24th. It marks the ninth year of a national initiative to raise awareness about and expand access to emergency contraception (EC). Every year, leading advocacy organizations, service providers, and other community stakeholders perform grassroots organizing, provide education, and engage in policy debates, all culminating in our BUYBC Day of Action.

We invite you and your activists to participate in the 2010 BUYBC Campaign by using our free educational materials featuring Rosie the Riveter (available for order at www.BackUpYourBirthControl.org) to educate others about how EC works, highlight the specific challenges that women face when trying to obtain EC, identify sources of free and low-cost EC, and applaud efforts to remove the remaining barriers to EC access.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUR ACTIVISTS

**EC Education for Teen Educators and Teens**

- Host a party, film screening, “Battle of the Bands,” or sporting event and distribute BUYBC materials on what EC is and where teens can get it.
- Distribute BUYBC materials in places that teens frequent, such as malls, movie theatres, and affordable restaurants.
- Join our online community. Add Back Up Your Birth Control as a friend on MySpace and Facebook and invite your friends, co-workers, and the teens you work with to do the same. You can also link to the Back Up Your Birth Control site on your organization’s website and insert our Rosie buttons into your pages to spread the word about EC!
- Partner with local medical groups and organizations to plan a BUYBC event such as “How to Talk to your Doctor about EC.” Teens who attend can become EC resources for other teens who may be hesitant to speak to their healthcare provider about birth control.
- Make sure that the medical providers in your community are prepared to talk with teen patients about EC. Many providers may not ordinarily raise the subject of birth control with their younger patients. Others may mention it to teen patients, but not take the initiative to dispel myths that surround EC, including the notion that EC can terminate an existing pregnancy.
- Encourage teens to write to their state and federal elected officials to demand that the FDA remove age restrictions on over-the-counter sales of EC. Teens who are

Contact the Back Up Your Birth Control Campaign by e-mailing Amy Boldosser aboldosser@nirhealth.org or Aileen Gleizer agleizer@nirhealth.org. For more information visit www.backupyourbirthcontrol.org.
willing to share their experiences of needing and/or being unable to access EC can serve as powerful reminders to politicians and the public of the ongoing need for EC education and increased access for teens.

- Research the sex education curricula (if any) of your public schools to determine if teens are learning about EC. If not, contact school administrators and teachers to promote the inclusion of EC in sex education courses. To express your concern that EC is being excluded from curricula although it is a safe and effective way to reduce the risk of pregnancy, you can attend a school board meeting. If your public schools are educating teens about EC, thank them for prioritizing the reproductive health of their students!

- To assist teens who are 17 or younger with accessing EC in the ‘dual-label’ environment, host an information session or distribute information about free or low-cost healthcare providers in your area who understand the importance of timely EC access. For a list of Title X clinics, which serve low-income women and teens, visit the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association webpage: http://www.nfprha.org/main/about_us.cfm?Category=Member_Clinic_Directory&Section=Main.

Local Media:

- Send a press release or local press advisory to media outlets highlighting your BUYBC Campaign related events. You can also write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper using our talking points, available on the BUYBC website.
- Invite your local media (TV, radio, newspaper) to attend and cover your BUYBC event.
- Blog about your event to increase participation and interest in your BUYBC Day of Action activities. You can also send an announcement about your event to reproductive health blogs that you enjoy reading.

Public Awareness Activities:

- Pass out BUYBC wallet cards or brochures in your neighborhood informing people about EC and the BUYBC Campaign/website. Set up a table at your local park, farmers’ market, street fair or other public places and events to distribute these materials.
- Distribute BUYBC materials in Spanish to women at salons, grocery stores, or community centers offering free ESL classes in predominantly Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. Be sensitive to the stigma surrounding the discussion of sex, birth control, etc. in certain communities.
- Use our graphics to provide a link to the BUYBC website through your e-mail signature.
- Create a hardcopy or electronic EC resource guide for your community. Include listings of phone numbers, addresses, and hours of area pharmacies, clinics and health centers that stock EC, along with prices so that people can identify their closest and cheapest form of EC. To see a sample guide visit: http://www.prochoiceny.org/boc/.
- Contact organizations that address sexual assault and domestic violence in your community and ask them to participate in your BUYBC activities. Collaborate with them to ensure that the unique needs of sexual assault and domestic violence survivors are being met. Find out whether your local hospitals’ emergency rooms inform survivors about and provide them with EC, especially if the laws in your state require EC in the ER. For more information, visit: http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_EC.pdf.

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Organize an EC roundtable discussion with elected officials, clinicians and medical experts to identify the work that needs to be done with respect to EC awareness/access in your community. Identify groups of advocates and local elected officials that are willing to help bring about any necessary changes and outline future steps.

Engaging your Local Medical Community:
- Write to or visit women’s health centers/clinics in your area and ask them to promote the BUYBC Campaign in their waiting rooms. Invite them to participate in your Day of Action activities.
- Invite an obstetrician, gynecologist or pharmacist to speak to your activists about the medical facts and importance of expanding access to EC in your community.
- Contact your local pharmacy board or pharmacy association and let them know you are willing to help them create packets of information about EC or distribute them to pharmacies yourself.
- Contact local pharmacies and hospitals to inquire about their EC stocking and provision policies. Include educational materials and information to assist their staff with informing clients about EC, including advance provision of EC to patients.

Legislative Activities:
- Send a petition/letter/e-mail encouraging legislators to support state legislation expanding access to EC. Find out who your elected officials are at www.congress.org or your state government’s website.
- Send emails to the Federal Food and Drug Administration and President Obama, urging them to expand over-the-counter EC access to all women: commission@fda.gov, president@whitehouse.gov.

Campus Activities:
- Find out if EC is available at your campus health center in both prescription and non-prescription form and at what price: If it is not available or too costly for many students, send a formal letter to your college administration requesting that campus health centers stock EC and work with students to make it more affordable. You can also raise the issue of EC access on campus at the next Board of Trustees meeting and request a campus community referendum on it.
- Go “under-cover” and take notes on how your health center’s pharmacists and staff treat you when you come in to request EC. Publicize what you find so that any necessary changes to protocol can be made.
- Encourage your health center to use BUYBC materials in sexual health and peer education workshops.
- Pass out wallet cards and brochures on campus letting people know about EC and the BUYBC Campaign/website. Create and hang a large banner promoting the BUYBC Campaign in a highly frequented place such as a building where many classes are held, your student union, the main library, or a large residence or dining hall. You can also post EC facts on fliers and in chalk around campus.
- Distribute EC fact sheets that include information about where women can purchase EC and how much it costs to Resident Advisors so that college students have the option of learning about EC in the privacy of their dorm room.
- Urge students to have EC on hand before going away for Spring Break (i.e. hang posters, send an e-mail blast, post a message on MySpace/Facebook).
- Ask your women’s or gender studies department, any sororities, and other interested departments and student organizations to promote and participate in

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BUYBC activities. Visit the BUYBC website to learn about the BUYBC Campus Challenge, through which a college student or group can earn $500 for coming up with an educational and creative way to spread information about EC!

- Invite a speaker who is passionate and knowledgeable about EC to visit your campus and promote the BUYBC Day of Action. Arrange for campus groups/departments, sororities, the women’s or gender studies department, and the staff of campus newspapers to attend the event.
- Organize and advertise an EC speak-out/open mic session in a busy area on campus. Invite both students and faculty to talk about the importance of timely EC access for all women. Contact local and student media outlets to cover the session.
- Work with fraternities and other clubs to educate male students about how EC works and where they can find it. You can stress that EC is available OTC to both women and men who are 18 and older and encourage them to take responsibility for preventing unintended pregnancy (along with their partners).